

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 31 and 33; and adds claim 35. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-5, 7-14, and 20-35 will be pending. Accordingly, the application presents twenty-nine (29) claims, of which five (5) are in independent form (claims 1, 7, 11, 20, and 31). For the addition of claim 35, claim fees of \$25 are due. For this claim fee and any other fees which are deemed necessary following submittal of this Amendment, the undersigned hereby authorizes such fees to be charged to our deposit account, Deposit Account No. 061910

In the Office Action, Examiner rejected claims 31-34 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over Sugawara et al. (US Patent No. 5,829,219). With respect to claims 31-34, Examiner states that the Sugawara reference discloses a vehicle roof frame comprising side frame members (12) and cross member (14). Examiner additionally states that the side frame member (12) of the Sugawara reference has protrusions (15) that have an upper portion with a corrugated configuration. Also, Examiner states that the cross member (14) has corrugated end portions (23) that receive the protrusions (15). Examiner additionally states the end section of the cross member (14) and the upper portion of the protrusions (15) of the Sugawara reference have matching shapes that align. Examiner further states that the cross member and the protrusions of the Sugawara reference are welded together and contends that the bead of the weld is considered a releasable fastener because it can be broken to release the connection between the two components.

Applicant respectfully traverses Examiner's rejections, yet makes claim amendments herein in order to advance prosecution of this application. On February 28, 2006, Applicant's attorney had a telephone interview with the Examiner in which the above rejections were discussed, along with the meaning of the term "releasable fasteners" used in claim 31. During the interview, Applicant's attorney explained that the use of the term "releasable fasteners" in claim 31 was meant to infer that the fasteners are "releasable and reattachable" in use, which Applicant believes falls outside the teaching of the cited art. Further, if claim 31 were amended to include such "releasable and reattachable" language, it would appear to make claim 31 allowable in light of the cited art. Examiner agreed with Applicant's attorney.

As such, Applicant has amended claim 31 to include such "releasable and reattachable" language, replacing "releasable fasteners" with "fasteners that are releasable and reattachable". In turn, Applicant asserts that upon entry of this Amendment, claim 31 is hereby in condition for allowance. As such, the allowance of claim 31 as described and shown above thereby renders claims 32-34 also allowable. Additionally, Applicant has added new dependent claim 35 to already allowed claim 7.


Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested. Applicant believes that no new matter will be introduced by entry of these amendments and that the amendments are fully supported by the specification and application as a whole. Applicant has amended the claims solely to advance prosecution of this application and to obtain the allowance of claims at the earliest possible date. No admission should be inferred by these amendments. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the originally filed claims in a continuation application.

In light of the above, Applicant submits that the present rejections should be withdrawn and prompt allowance of this application is respectfully requested. If the Examiner feels that prosecution of the present application can be materially advanced by a telephonic interview, the undersigned would welcome a call at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: _____

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Please grant any extension of time necessary for entry; charge any fee due to Deposit Account No. 06-1910.